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ABSTRACT

The changing racial and ethnic makeup of Canadian society has had a dramatic impact on demands for representation in leadership positions. Policies will continue to be ineffective until a better understanding is gained of the typical experiences that minorities have in organizations, and, in particular, of the factors that impede and facilitate the promotion of minority people. The research is based on a small number of interviews (N=5) from a larger ongoing study of the socialization of male and female visible minority managers in school systems. The theoretical rationale elaborates on the organizational socialization of workers, underrepresentation, and tokenism. Methodology, results, and discussion are described; interviews were analyzed to identify emerging themes, and analyzed again according to a framework based on an adaptation of a theoretical model of organizational socialization developed by Feldman (1976). The framework suggests that anticipatory socialization, accommodation, and role management are three major stages in the organizational socialization process. The experiences of the visible minority women interviewed have been similar in many ways to the experiences of the nonminorities described in the literature and identified in this research. Six differences noted include the importance of young male mentors and the profound positive impact of female role models for those raised in a matriarchal society. Appended are the factors (descriptive terms) affecting socialization. (33 references) (RR)

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THE SOCIALIZATION EXPERIENCES OF MINORITY WOMEN
IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION POSITIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The changing racial and ethnic make-up of Canadian society has had a dramatic impact on the demands for representation in leadership positions in fields such as public administration and education. In recent years there has been an increase in the awareness that women and visible minorities have been given different opportunities from those provided white male candidates for leadership positions.

The emergence of reports such as *The Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* (1970) and the more recent *Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service* (1990), and of numerous employment equity policies indicates that the issue of representation is deemed an important one. Equity policies and "proactive" hiring practices have been disappointingly ineffective (eg. Rees, 1990, has shown that little if any gain has been made in the representation of women in public education leadership roles).

It is assumed in the research reported here, that such policies will continue to be ineffective until a better understanding is gained of the typical experiences that minorities have in organizations, and, in particular, of the factors which impede and facilitate the promotion of minority people to leadership positions in organizations. It is assumed further that, while studies of leader behaviour and traits have provided some useful information about the skills and attitudes needed for effective leadership in organizations, additional information is needed about the socialization of minorities in the work place before effective recruitment and selection for leadership positions can occur. Many of the existing studies have been grounded in the view that the organization is a passive entity in the socialization process, a more appropriate view recognizes the institution as active. Yeakey, Johnston and Adkison (1986) have written that "occupations, industries, and organizations have exhibited patterns of racial and sexual stratification that have persisted historically" (p. 111). Ball (1987) has reported that while relatively little is known about the employment experiences of women educators and the dynamics of gender in schools, even less is known about the employment experiences of educators from racial and ethnic groups. However, according to Ortiz (1982) who has completed one of the few major studies of this issue, educational organizations do not try in an equitable way to prepare white men, women, and minorities to become organizational leaders. Instead, she says, they prepare "white males to administer and manage adults, women to instruct children, and minorities to direct and contain other minorities" (p.147).

The research reported here is based on a small number of interviews from a larger ongoing study of the socialization of male and female visible minority managers in school systems. Justification for isolation of information related to women visible minority leaders comes, in part, from Ortiz (1982) as well as Korah (1990) who has concluded that while women and visible minority employees encounter barriers to management, visible minority women may be doubly challenged by the combination of barriers of both gender and race. The findings reported are tentative, at best, and limited by the small sample size.

THEORETICAL RATIONALE

Organizational Socialization

Organizational socialization has been the subject of considerable research for many years. Two perspectives of the process are identifiable from this research. The vast majority of studies emerge from a traditional perspective which views the socialization process as a primary one in which the individual is pictured as entering an organization which is essentially passive and succeeding, or not succeeding, as the result of self-directed actions. Barriers to advancement within the organization, in this view, are the result of the workers' own deficiencies - a "blame-the-victim" (Ryan, 1971) perspective. This deficiency view is being challenged increasingly and a "new institutionalism" perspective is emerging which depicts institutions as active in their own right and not simply as the sum of outside forces or of their members (Hansot and Tyack, 1988). In the contemporary model, differences in career outcomes are explained in terms of differential access to organizational socialization processes (Russell and Wright, 1990).

In adopting the more recent view of organizational socialization, researchers are led to pose questions related to the worker's experiences within the organizational culture to better understand the process. Workers are seen as granting powers to leaders who evolve within the structural organization of the group. Both workers and leaders are viewed as also being greatly influenced by factors in their lives external to the organization.

Wright (1990) has identified four distinct foci in studies of the organizational socialization process: characteristics of socialization, stages of socialization, content of socialization, and practices of socialization. In her review of the literature related to socialization she has concluded that a plethora of factors contribute to the overall socialization process. (See Appendix I.) Further, she has concluded that existing conceptualizations of the socialization process tend to concentrate on sub-groupings of the factors while what is needed is a more holistic and inclusive consideration of the process.

A large body of literature exists which attempts to explain why and how women and minority groups are under represented in the leadership of organizations. Under representation and tokenism, the latter concept as developed by Kanter (1977a), are discussed in what follows.

Under Representation

A review of the research on management (leadership) has identified a number of perspectives which are used to explain the under representation of visible minorities and women in organizational leadership positions. Considerable research suggests that white males and others behave differently in the manager role and that those reported differences are often used to justify the under representation of others in management positions. Most explanations for the under representation of women and visible minorities are based in one of three main perspectives: a psychological perspective which maintains that particular traits are gender or culture linked and that there is little potential for change; a sociological perspective which views differential early socialization as accounting for under representation; or a structuralist perspective which perceives structural features of the organization as limiting equity for some groups. Each of these perspectives gives rise to strategies for overcoming the inequity. A psychological focus would suggest the need for programs designed to change identified characteristics or behaviours of individuals; a sociological perspective would suggest the need to change processes in early socialization; and the structuralist perspective would suggest a focus on the features of the organization which limit access to and upward mobility of certain groups of people.

The psychological perspective has lost considerable ground in recent years and it is clear that there are theoretical and practical problems which are not explained by a purely sociological perspective. This has led to a focus on the structuralist perspective which explains the under representation of women and minorities as the result of institutional patterns in training, hiring, etc., that favour the promotion of white males over women and minorities (Adkison, 1981; Kanter, 1977a). Lyman and Speizer (1980) have reported that male corporate managers prefer to hire and promote males who are a "known quantity" over females who are viewed as "unpredictable and incomprehensible". A number of writers (including Cava, 1988, Ortiz, 1982, and Peitchinis, 1989) report a strong relationship between the type of training and first job assignments and upward mobility in the organization. Shakeshaft (1987) and Asplund (1988) have suggested that, even in those organizations with fairly clear paths for advancement, women and minorities do not have the same access to advancement as do white males. Gibb-Clark (1990) has reported that minority managers are subjected to an organizational long-term memory with respect to their mistakes. Marshall and Mitchell (1989) have supported the position that the structuralist perspective leads to a deficiency model, but one that can be used to focus on deficiencies in the organization rather than just in women or minorities.

The resurgence of interest in the sociological theory developed by George Simmel (1902) which occurred in the early 1960's served as a basis for the explanations which Kanter (1977b) has generated related to the treatment of persons with outsider, as opposed to insider, status as they exist in organizations. Kanter argues that "groups with varying proportions of people of different social types differ qualitatively in dynamics and process" (pp.965-966).

There is increasing evidence that women and minorities are often naive about how organizations really operate - particularly the informal aspects of the organization. They tend to assume that everybody "plays by the same set of rules" (Fernandez, 1981; Kanter, 1989). Both women and minorities appear to need what Goldner, Ference and Ritti(1977) have described as "cynical knowledge", the knowledge and understanding of the decision processes and rules of the game operating in organizations, as well as political skills. Pfeffer(1982) has said that an ideology of cooperative effort, goal maximization, and working together in the organizational interest tends to work against one's discovery and use of such knowledge. That knowledge tends to relate more to the informal side or "soft underbelly" of organizational life (Mintzberg, 1989) and, while important to moving up the organizational hierarchy, is knowledge which women and minorities appear not to gain as easily. These studies suggest that women and minorities are limited by their lack of the insider's knowledge and understanding.

Tokenism

Kanter (1977b) uses the term "token" to describe those persons who are alone or nearly alone in a peer group. According to her, the rarity of their type in the group puts tokens in the position of representing their ascribed category to the group whether they want to or not. Thus, they will be "hyphenated members" of the group, that is "woman engineer" or "black doctor" (p.967). Token, according to Kanter, "reflects one's status as a symbol of one's kind". Token status is heightened or dramatized by the degree to which the token's category is visible, physically obvious, and proportionally rare or new to the organizational setting (p.969). More recent research (Yoder and Sinnett, 1985) suggests that society-wide stereotypes are also a factor in token status.

A number of other writers have discussed the impact of tokenism. Bancroft, Wills and DePass (1988), in their study of the civic participation of visible minorities, have said that, in terms of appointments to boards and commissions, there is an "assumption that minority persons are interested in appointments only in the field of human rights, immigration, social assistance, etc."(p.2). Moses (1989), in describing the experiences of black women in higher education, has referred to the "token syndrome". She has maintained that in the higher education society, the numerically dominant group controls the organization and its culture and the smaller number of people from other groups tend to be seen as representatives of their group rather than as individuals. This often limits their being seriously considered for advancement.

Summary

Organizational socialization occurs in organizations and is part of the process which leads to promotion to leadership roles. Three perspectives of organizational socialization dominate the research in the area - a psychological perspective, a sociological perspective and a structural perspective. These perspectives represent an evolution in thought. While the psychological perspective is losing popularity, the sociological perspective and the structural perspective are gaining support.

There is considerable evidence that equal and equitable opportunities do not exist for persons from minority groups, including women. Explanations vary about the reasons for non promotion and under representation. Tokenism frequently becomes a factor in the promotion of women and minorities and often leads to positions which relate to human rights, or some other specialized issue, rather than to the more traditional roles occupied by the majority group. The result is often marginalized careers.

There is also substantial data to suggest that women and some minorities approach leadership in a more consensual manner than do white males and that their experience of a different culture limits their view of the organization's workings. These factors contribute to less well developed knowledge of the informal side of the organization and less opportunity for advancement.

Given this position, it seems reasonable to suggest that by learning more about the organizational socialization of minority leaders, it may be possible to assist in overcoming under representation of minorities. The questions which guide this investigation are

1. What are the organizational socialization experiences of minority educational administrators?
2. How are these experiences similar/different from those reported in the literature as typical?

METHODOLOGY

Semi-structured interviews lasting from one and a half to two hours were conducted with each of the five administrators. The interview guide was developed from an extensive review of the literature, focus group interviews (Morgan, 1988), and from discussions with researchers who had conducted similar studies in recent years. The conceptual framework which guided the analysis allows for the exploration of linkages between variables related to token status, organizational socialization and lateral or upward career mobility. Areas addressed by the interview include early work experience and work history; values and attitudes related to mentoring, professionalism, power and success; and views about the role of race and gender in shaping employee experiences and opportunities in contemporary organizations. Demographic and biographical information was collected in addition.

Analysis of the interviews was conducted independently by the researchers without a framework in an effort to identify emerging themes. Each researcher then analyzed the interviews guided by a framework based on an adaptation of a theoretical model of organizational socialization developed by Feldman(1976). This framework suggests that there are three major stages in the organizational socialization process: anticipatory socialization, which relates to learning and experiences which occur before entry to the job; accommodation, which is the process of getting to know the organization and becoming a participating member in it; and role management, which is the mediation of conflict between the demands of the work group, the larger organization, and factors outside the organization such as community, family, and friends.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To maintain the anonymity of the participants in the study, there will be limited discussion of their biographical and demographic data. All are administrators in elementary school systems and all but one were born outside Canada and came to Canada as adults. All have had extensive academic and professional preparation in Canada. One has never married, three are divorced.

Anticipatory Socialization

All of these women had had at least part of their schooling in church affiliated single sex schools where, as one expressed it, "If something had to be done, it was done by a female...I never learned that we could not do anything." She added "we never learned that stupidity pays or anything like that." Four of the women had attended Catholic schools where they report having had dedicated and strong role models in the nuns who were their teachers.

The choice of education as a profession seems to have been shaped by the more limited career choices open to women during the period in which they were making choices. The one exception stated that she had wanted to be a teacher since she was a little girl, but that she had not liked any of her own teachers.

Each of these women identified a female family member as having been a strong force in their formative years. For two of the women, their grandmother was the strong force which added to their knowledge that women can and do do things. Mothers and aunts influenced the other women. Miles (1985) has discussed the early influence of grandmothers on women leaders and several of the women talked about their grandmothers as being "feminists" and strong matriarchal figures who kept the family centred and who had major influences on their own choice of career. Visible minority women who had grown up in societies in which they were members of the majority race reported having had strong role models and this may have given them a slight edge over Canadian born visible minorities. Part of the women's own explanation of this phenomenon is that they had role models in positions of authority as part of their childhood experience, which is much less likely to be true for Canadian-born minorities.

Fathers have played significant roles for those women who lived at home. Two fathers had been school teachers or principals and one father had been a well paid labourer who talked to his daughter frequently about the importance of an education as a tool for getting ahead.

Each woman attributed her success in the school system to her natural enthusiasm and positive view on life. The need to be perceived as energetic and creative was mentioned frequently.

Accommodation

All the women reported having at least one mentor during their career. Most of the mentors were young men at an early stage in their own administrative career. The women may have attracted the attention of their mentors initially through their high level of involvement in a wide range of school activities. Each women described situations in which she demonstrated a proactive approach and willingness to tackle all kinds of challenging tasks. One woman described her first male mentor as a young man new to the system who was pleased with her performance and who kept giving her additional responsibilities.

Three of the women identified female role models, none a racial minority, but these women role models were depicted as experiencing such performance pressure (Kanter, 1977a) themselves that they appear not to have the time or energy to take on a mentoring role. As one said, "She [her woman principal] had her own problems ...having to go on retreats with male colleagues who played poker." One woman reported having had a visible minority male role model, an experience that was important to her confidence. Two of the women identified male superintendents as sponsors in their career, one identified a professor from her teacher education program.

That these women have experienced additional performance pressures themselves is indicated by their references to the need for minority women to have superior credentials, to be more positive than, and to work harder than others. As one expressed it, "I wonder why I've always been so lucky but I think it's also your approach to life. If you reach out. I'm always laughing..." She goes on to say that when she is talking with those she wants to mentor, "I say smile even if you bitch afterward or pound the wall. Take it!"

Three of the women have developed their credentials in high profile specialty areas to the extent that they are part time university professors in their area of specialization. All have been extensively involved in professional development programs and two attribute their promotions to administrative positions as having been partly the result of their involvement in the organization of district-wide professional activity days. None of the women was extensively involved with teacher union activities, although most had had some involvement at the local level.

All the women reported considerable involvement with their communities which extended into their schools. These activities go far beyond the parent-school group, but the role of community in school seems to be important to each of these women. This is evident, too, in the degree to which they use community groups in their schools in their role management behaviour.

Three of the women described themselves as "sounding boards" or mediators for visible minorities in their schools throughout their careers. They do not appear to have been highly visible in this role, but to have worked within the system.

Visibility was identified by all the women as important to career advancement, but visibility that comes from getting results and not from failures. One woman, however, described the need to be very sensitive to the fine line between being visible and being perceived as promoting oneself.

Role Management

As might be expected, two areas of potential conflict with which all those interviewed have had to deal is the insider versus outsider relations which result from differences of race and gender. There is no clear consensus in the literature about which of these differences represents the most formidable barrier to career mobility. There is agreement, however, that the two factors together represent, as a member of the first focus group expressed it, a "double whammy" for minority women.

In relation to the problems which they described as gender-based, one woman commented on the fact that "Men like to dominate at meetings" and that women must learn to speak up more. She appears to have had no mentor coaching her at the time, but worked on her own so that she would be less intimidated by the behaviour of male colleagues at meetings.

In addition to the need to be visible in the community and to work well with parents and outsiders from the school, the need for integrity is apparent. One woman noted, "You have to invest in yourself ... there is nothing waiting for you in your career that is worth losing ... integrity for."

Two women talked about the difficulty of gaining access to administrative jobs and suggested that this "threshold" was more difficult for minorities than for others. The work histories of the other women confirmed this. Several of the women acknowledged that it may have been easier for them to get administrative jobs than for Canadian born visible minorities because of the strong matriarchal traditions they have. They expressed concern for their children's futures because of the small number of role models available to them in Canadian society. Two of the women described their taking their own children to visit grandparents where they would see for themselves that minorities can do anything non-minorities can do. Three of the women perceive ceilings existing on their advancement which may relate to their minority status.

One woman reported having a very supportive husband whose support extended to helping her type her papers while taking courses to upgrade her credentials, the same woman reported having an extended family with her in Canada who looked after her children and who took them to all the activities children expect to attend. For the others family life has been more difficult. Three of these women have been divorced, and have had to deal with the challenges of being a single parent. There is an expressed sense of concern about the future provided for their children in Canadian society and a significant disillusionment with the education system. None wanted their children to be teachers. One woman said, "it's just

too tough, the impossible is being asked of them now. The school is the last institution in society and every societal ill has to be cured by the school."

Two women related experiences of being mistaken for support staff by persons from outside the school visiting their school. In one the principal was identified as the school secretary, in the other as just not being the principal because she was black. Two of the women stated, however, that once they had become administrators, they were accepted as colleagues by other administrators and not as visible minority women. One related incidents which demonstrate that the accepting attitude does not extend to non-work settings. One woman said that she was perceived as no threat by the wives of her colleagues because of her colour.

CONCLUSIONS

The experiences of the visible minority women interviewed have been similar in many ways to the experiences of non-minorities described in the literature and identified in our own research. Differences are apparent, however, which are worthy of note:

1. The profound positive impact of a female role model for those raised in a matriarchal society
2. The importance of young male mentors for these women.
3. The societal expectation that they do not really belong in administrative positions.
4. The extra difficulties in crossing the threshold from teaching to mainstream administrative positions.
5. The apparent relegation to marginal administrative positions.
6. The disillusionment with education as a viable career for their children.

If, as Fernandez (1981) has suggested, visible minorities and women are naive about how one advances in an organization, then it is important that they have access to information about those who have experienced some success already. Studying such cases, telling the stories of these pioneers, may help to challenge the myths that exist about their experiences and help them and others to better understand where the system which has worked for white males breaks down for other groups and where adjustments are required.

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APPENDIX I
FACTORS AFFECTING SOCIALIZATION
(Wright, 1990)

Ability to deal with people; Administrator beliefs; Age; Aggression; Altruism; Attachment to old position; Attributional processes; Autonomy; Availability of other jobs; Career stage; Cause for transfer; Clarity/predictability; Cognitive processes; Communication channels; Community ties; Congruence of evaluation; Congruence of needs and values; Contrasts with previous jobs; Coping skills; Critical incidents; Critical learning time; Culture/climate/ethos; Delay of gratification; Early successes; Ecological characteristics; Education/expertise/credentials; Expectations of others; Expectations of self; Experience/biography; Explanations; Flexibility; Formal context; Gender; Group cohesiveness; Hours of work; Influence of non-professionals; Informal context; Initial reactions of work group; Initiation to task; Interaction with students; Intergroup role conflict; Interpretative schemes; Involvement opportunities; Job commitment/involvement; Job description; Job tension; Knowledge of role; Leader acceptance; Leader-mentor interaction; Management system for transfer; Material constraints; Mentor: Model of socialization; Non-word values/interests; Norms; Occupational dimensions; Opportunities for advancement; Organizational control; Organizational levels; Organizational needs; Outside conflict; Parental expectations; Peer evaluation; Performance standards; Personality; Political awareness/sensitivity; Power of the socializer; Predecessor's stay; Pre-employment information; Priorities; Professional frustration; Pupilhood; Race; Reality shock; Reciprocal learning opportunities; Recruiting practices; Resources; Role ambiguity; Role of supervisor; Role modelling; Role pressure; Salary benefits; Satisfaction; School demographic differences; School integration; School size; Self-esteem/efficacy; Social economic status; Socialization agents; Status; Supervision quality; Supervision evaluation; Supervisor's competence; Supervisor's consideration; Task ability level; Tenure; Time in previous position; Timing; Timing of feedback; Transfer site; Type of feedback; Unions; Unit exchange; Upward mobility; View of new organization; Withitness; Work activities; Work motivation.

Age